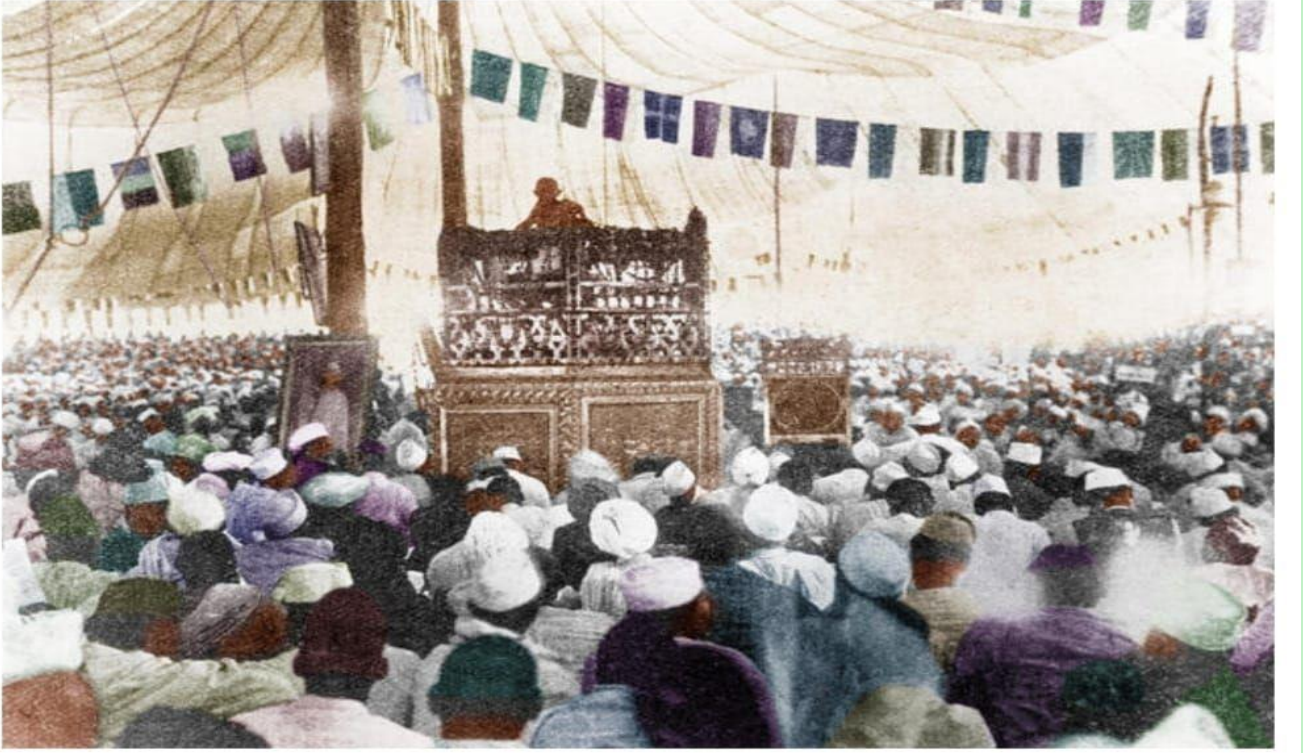
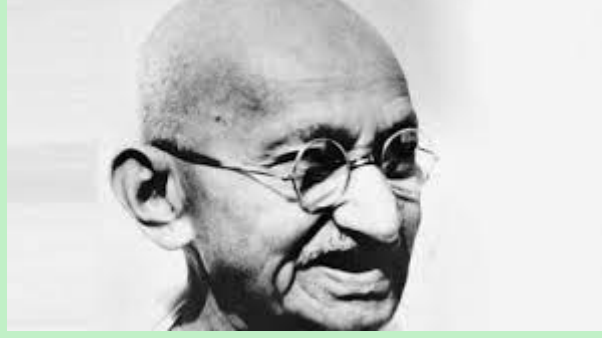


பெல்காம் காங்கிரஸ் மாநாட்டின் நூற்றாண்டு



Gandhi's Speeches as President of Congress – Belgaum Conference 1924
December

Compiled by : R. Pattabiraman

25-12-2024

On the Eve of Centenary Year

BELGAUM Congress conference 1924- 100 years

பெல்காம் காங்கிரஸ் மாநாட்டின் நூற்றாண்டு

காந்தியடிகள் ஒரே ஒருமுறைதான் காங்கிரஸ் அமைப்பின் தலைவர் என்கிற பொறுப்பில் அமர்ந்தார். 1924 டிசம்பர் 25-27 நாட்களில் பெல்காமில் நடந்த மாநாட்டில்தான் அவர் காங்கிரஸ் தலைவராக தலைமையுரையை டிசம்பர் 26 அன்று ஆற்றினார். முன்னரான டிசம்பர் 25 அன்று அவர் பொருளாய்வுக்குழுவில் உரையை தந்திருந்தார். டிசம்பர் 27ல் நிறைவுரையாற்றினார்.

டிசம்பர் 25, 26, 27, 28 மற்றும் 30 ஆகிய நாட்களில் காந்தியடிகளின் உரையை மட்டும் தனியாக தொகுத்து இங்கு தந்துள்ளேன். காந்தியடிகள் நூல் தொகுப்பு 25 லிருந்து 63 பக்க அளவிலான, இந்த ஆங்கிலத் தொகுப்பு தரப்பட்டுள்ளது.

டிசம்பர் 25 அன்று மாநாட்டிற்கு இப்படி ஊதாரித்தனமாக செலவு செய்யலாமா என் கடிந்து, சார்பாளர் வசதி கட்டணம் மீதான கரிசனத்தை அவர் வெளிப்படுத்தினார். பின்னர் பொருளாய்வுக்குழுவில் அவர் உரை நிகழ்த்தினார். இந்த இரண்டும் இத்தொகுப்பில் இடம் பெற்றுள்ளன.

டிசம்பர் 26 அன்று தலைமையுரையை மிக கூர்மையாக- பிரச்சனைகள் அடிப்படையில் அவர் நல்கினார். நான் கவனித்த சில அம்சங்களை இங்கு தந்துள்ளேன். உரையை படிப்போர் இவை ஒவ்வொன்றின் மீதும் அவரது பார்வை எப்படி இருந்தது என உணரமுடியும்

இந்து முஸ்லீம் ஒற்றுமை

தீண்டாமை ஒழிப்பு

எந்திரங்கள்

நூற்பின் அவசியம்

சுயராஜ்யம்- 12 அம்சங்கள்

உடல் உழைப்பின் அவசியம்

சீர்திருத்த இயக்கம் மட்டுமல்ல காங்கிரஸ்

தேசிய பள்ளிகள்

ஒத்துழையாமையால் வேலையிழந்தோர் அலவன்ஸ்

போதை பழக்க கொடுமை

வங்க ஒடுக்குமுறை

எனது நம்பிக்கை

அடுத்து காந்தியடிகள் இரங்கல் தீர்மானத்தில் உரையாற்றினார்

டிசம்பர் 26ல் 'காந்தி- மோதிலால், தாஸ் உடன்பாடு', உறுப்பினராக நூற்பின் அவசியம் குறித்த உரை

மேற்கண்ட டிசம்பர் 26 உரைகள் இத்தொகுப்பில் இணைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

டிசம்பர் 27ல் தீண்டாமை ஒழிப்பு தீர்மானத்தில் காந்தி உரையாற்றுகிறார். அன்னி பெசண்ட் அறிக்கை மீது கருத்து சொல்கிறார்.

தேசிய கல்வி நிறுவனங்கள், காங்கிரஸ் அமைப்பு விதிகளில் மாற்றம், அபின் அரசாங்க கொள்கை, காங்கிரஸ் நிர்வாகிகள் ஆகியவை குறித்த தீர்மானங்களை காந்தி முன்வைக்கிறார்.

பின்னர் காந்தியடிகள் பெல்காம் மாநாட்டின் நிறைவுரையை தந்தார்.

பெல்காமில் காங்கிரஸ் மாநாடு ஒட்டி நடைபெற்ற தீண்டாமை ஒழிப்பு மாநாட்டில் பங்கேற்று டிசம்பர் 27ல் உரை நல்கினார். மேற்கூறிய டிசம்பர் 27ன் உரைகள் இத்தொகுப்பில் இடம் பெற்றுள்ளன.

டிசம்பர் 28ல் பசுவதை தடுப்பு மாநாட்டிலும் இந்து முஸ்லீம் ஒற்றுமையை சொல்லி உரை நல்கினார். டிசம்பர் 30ல்

சமஸ்தானங்கள் மாநாட்டில் உரையாற்றினர். இந்த இரண்டும்
இத்தொகுப்பில் கொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன.

பெல்காம் காங்கிரஸ் மாநாட்டின் நூற்றாண்டை காணும் வேளையில்,
இத்தொகுப்பு பயனுள்ளதாக இருக்கும் எனக் கருதுகிறேன். காந்தி
வால்யும் 25ல் முழுமையாக காணலாம்.

25-12-2024 - ஆர் . பட்டாபிராமன்

377. *STATEMENT ON A.I.C.C. EXTRAVAGANCE,
BELGAUM*

December 25, 1924

Gandhiji then made a statement that there was too much lavishness in the expenditure of the All-India Committee. Too much money was spent in decorations and accommodation and the present delegate's fee of Rs. 10 was too much. He complained that his own hut was also too costly, and ought not to have been constructed like that. Too much money was also spent on printing and he wanted to stop all that. If he had been a member of the Committee, he would cut down the expenditure for accommodation, etc. He accordingly suggested that the delegate's fee should be Re. 1 instead of Rs. 10 as at present as he had received complaints that nearly Rs. 100 had to be spent by delegates for their fare, etc. The Subjects Committee agreed to reduce the fee to Re. 1.

It was next decided to fix the venue of the next Congress in that province which on the population basis showed the best results in connection with khaddar and boycott of foreign cloth.

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-12-1924

378. *SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING,
BELGAUM¹*

December 25, 1924

The following is the full text of the moving speech made by Mahatma Gandhi at the meeting of the Subjects Committee of the All-India Congress on Thursday last:

Tomorrow we meet sharp at 3 o'clock. A few minutes will be spent in musical recitations. The chairman of the Reception Committee will not take more than 15 minutes to deliver his speech. I do not propose to read my address. My speech will be distributed to you this evening. You will kindly study that address, for the address will be taken as read. I shall make a few simple introductory remarks not covering more than 30 minutes. I shall begin in Hindustani and then speak in English. On the whole it would not exceed 30 minutes.

¹ Mahadev Desai's report of this speech, partly indirect, appeared in *Young India*, 1-1-1925, under the caption, "Implication of Non-violence".

Tomorrow the first resolution that will be moved after the formal reading of the addresses will be that relating to the Calcutta agreement. It will be opposed by Maulana Hasrat Mohani. In this connection let me make a few observations. You are the representatives in a sense. We have got all the delegates. I would respectfully warn you against accepting the resolution if you want to put the whole burden upon my shoulders. I should say my shoulders are incapable of carrying that burden. I want to carry that burden only with your assistance. Unless every one of you is prepared to give your assistance whole-heartedly in spirit and to the letter, our purpose cannot be achieved. Our purpose is to bring about boycott of foreign cloth. That can be done only by the assistance of the poorest of the poor men, women and children. It is an honest attempt and a proper attempt in my humble opinion to make on behalf of the nation. If we can achieve that boycott, which is the only thing we are capable of doing today, it is a way of demonstrating to ourselves and to the world that we can do thousand and other things also side by side, but only after the boycott is achieved.

You will remember there was an amendment today which hurt me. It was moved by Mr. Bhopatkar stating that when adults do not undertake to spin and wear khaddar on all occasions it is unfair on our part to expect children to do so. This really hurt me for the simple reason that he put a construction on the franchise which it is incapable of bearing. I say the franchise is the minimum that we imposed. Naturally it must be so, because it then becomes punishable in the sense that if that minimum compliance is not shown you will deprive people of the right of voting. The right of vote is a sacred thing. The minimum requirement had to be put. That was to put on khaddar on all political and ceremonial occasions, but surely that does not mean that you will discard khaddar cloth the moment you finish the Congress business in Belgaum. If that is the meaning, you cannot effectively boycott foreign cloth. I want you to read and understand the spirit of the agreement. This is the minimum expectation from the Congress members. How much more then can we expect from the nation? Not only should we adults but all children must wear khaddar on all occasions. I mean to say that khaddar must be our daily wear. Unless it becomes so there can be no boycott.

I have been told that the provision exempting unwilling persons from personally spinning is only a loop-hole not to spin, but that is not the sense in which I read the agreement. If that is the sense in which you take it, I would like to throw out the

resolution tomorrow, although it will pain me to find that the boycott of foreign cloth is an impossibility. The clause about unwillingness is only meant for those who are constitutionally disabled or unwilling. Children surely did not come under that clause. You must be prepared to work the agreement so that you make the boycott of foreign cloth a possibility. We shall see swinging success within a year if we only honestly work it. If delegates spread themselves in villages and expound to the people the message of the charkha, it will occupy the energy of all the best of us. Unless you have faith in it, there is no use passing this resolution. Therefore when you meet tomorrow, I want you to give your vote after intelligently and deliberately knowing the consequences of so doing. Unless you want sincerely to work this programme, it will not succeed. Every one of the delegates when he goes to his province should keep himself in touch with villagers of his province and tell them what they ought to do. Let the delegates vote tomorrow intelligently and deliberately and counting the consequences.

Before you disperse I would put you on your guard and remind you of the sacred trust imposed on you. It is my intention to finish the work on the 27th. We must have one clear day to dispose of business, to settle the procedure and the details of the work of the All-India Congress Committee and to appoint a Working Committee and so on.

Here Mr. N. C. Kelkar addressing Mahatma Gandhi said: "I have heard your appeal. It has so far been addressed to Swarajists. But I want you to appeal to No-changers also with regard to the other part of the pact, i.e., recognition of Council work on behalf of Congress and assisting Council-walas in all possible ways. I want to hear your appeal to them."

I entirely agree with Mr. Kelkar. In fact, I have already explained my views in the pages of *Young India*. Before we prepare ourselves for tomorrow's sacred task I should remind every No-changer of his duty. My appeal was not confined merely to Swarajists. I have always been told that there are among No-changers people who do not believe in the spinning franchise. My appeal to No-changers therefore is that they should take this agreement in the spirit in which it is intended by me and as it should be intended by them. I propose to assist Swarajists to the best of my ability and so far as one human being can do to assist them in their cause and I shall not damage it. I say deliberately their cause, because for some reason or other I do not see eye to eye with them in their methods. It is true

that their cause is not only theirs or of Congress merely, but of the nation. I am no judge. They have a perfect right to say, 'What is this charkha?' I have an equally perfect right to say, 'What is this Council?' which, they say, is 'one of the important items in our fight against the bureaucracy' I do not see eye to eye with them in their methods but although I doubt their methods I can help Swarajists and give them definite recognition for their policy in the Congress.

A MEMBER: In the name of the Congress?

Yes, in the name of the Congress. I cast about around me to see how I was to help them. I hit on the agreement. I saw I conferred no favour. It is their right, but I took some time before I saw it was their right and, seeing it is so, I must not even mentally hinder their programme. On the contrary, I must make an attempt to have a conviction in me that what they are doing is right. I shall also ask you to do likewise.

That is why I am going out of my way to put myself in touch with every Swarajist. I tried to keep my mind absolutely open to their arguments and their suggestions. That is the way in which I can give help to the Swarajists. If it is to mean that I will help them by speaking on platforms, on Government measures or conducting meetings and so on, I am sorry, I will not be able to do that because my heart is not in it. That is not the way in which I understood and entered into the agreement. These are my limitations. It is not that I am unwilling to do this but I want to be convinced. Immediately I am convinced, nothing on this earth will prevent me from declaring myself a full-fledged Swarajist. Then they will have a right to expect from me all the twenty-four hours, the whole of my waking hours. Today I cannot give them that whole-hearted support, but within my sphere I shall certainly give you encouraging and whole-hearted support. For example, when the Government want to damage you and your reputation you will find me side by side with you and eager to assist you. I want to suffer with you and, even if you reject my offer, I will say unto you, 'For Heaven's sake let me help you.' But when it comes to asking me to say in private that this policy is good, I must frankly confess that is not the meaning I should put upon it. But I want you to say, if people ask you in private, that even though they do not believe in this charkha, yet they must spin. You say you do not disbelieve in the charkha. If you disbelieve, you will be false to your trust if you do not reject the agreement.

MR. KELKAR: But the work will be in proportion to the negative mental condition. You should be prepared to make some allowance for those Swarajists who put some mental reservation as many of them have already done so.

If that mental reservation goes to the length of believing that the charkha will do no good, then you are bound to reject it.

The co-operation in respect of the charkha that I expect from Swarajists is not of the same kind and measure as might be expected from me regarding Council work and that is clearly put forth in the agreement. I do not expect impossible things from you. What I do expect from you is just that amount of support and strictest honesty in giving it to the measure of your ability and conviction and not a whit more. That is the spirit in which I want every member to approach this agreement and, if it is not that spirit, I prophesy that our movement will be a failure. But I will not have failed even then. Of course, I would be considered an egregious fellow, an egotist as some Europeans say and some Indians too say, that I alone claim to understand human nature and no one else does. I believe I am right. Others may be equally in the right, but if I do not believe in my rightness and in my methods I would be unfit to be at the helm of affairs. What I want to correct is that bad mentality, that mental reservation, to which Mr. Kelkar refers. There should be no mental reservation. Let no one think that the Swarajists are the enemies of India. Nor do I believe that the poor anarchist is the enemy of India. He acts according to his own lights. How can I judge? I can judge only his action, but there is no analogy here.

I say to No-changers, 'If you do not believe in the charkha, you will find ultimately there is no other alternative method for you, unless you resort to violent methods. If you find that the charkha does not satisfy your patriotic soul, you must go to Councils where at least you make a splash and get the discharge of some prisoners.' If today the Swarajists will sacrifice their dearest principles and say they want the discharge of prisoners in the Andamans, they can get it, but they are true to all the trust they have imposed on themselves and they will make no such bad bargain for the country. They have not gone to the Council in order to get the discharge of Andaman prisoners or even of a miserable ailing man in Yeravda Jail. I have often said and I repeat that, if you do not believe in the charkha, the only alternative is that you must go to the Councils. That is the secret of so many persons going to the Councils to do something. After all, those who have gone to the Councils represent the best intellects in the country. They are seasoned soldiers. Where, for

the example, will you find a man who has sacrificed his life like Pandit Malaviya? I knew him since 1901 when I saw him addressing the Congress under the presidentship of Sir Dinshaw Wacha. There is a great deal of work to his credit and he remains in the Council. He still swears by the Council and he is no fool. Every time I see him my head bows to him. Who is Mr. C. R. Das and who is Pandit Motilal Nehru? Why should they dress in this fashion today? Pandit Motilal Nehru once lived like a prince. He came to Lahore in a motor-car followed by an army of servants. Very few princes lived like him and his once beautiful garden with roses and flowers is today growing weeds. Is he a traitor? My head always bows before these and whenever I see them I feel that there is something incomplete in me because I cannot see eye to eye with them and understand their standpoint. Who again, is Mr. Kelkar? He is the representative of one of the greatest of Indians who will go down to posterity and who will be worshipped as a God in this country which believes in millions of Gods under that one universal God. My appeal to you therefore, is: "Cleanse your hearts, have charity, make your hearts as broad as the ocean. That is the teaching of the Koran and of the *Gita*. Do not judge others lest you be judged. There is that Supreme Judge who can hang you, but He lets you live. There are so many enemies around you and within you, but He protects and looks upon you with a kindly eye."

Cannot you do so? Why should we say that their politics are corrupt, that they are fraudulent men, that they are dishonest, or that they have not foresighted statesmanship? Heaven protect us from any such calumny of human nature. So long as the world lasts, so long will there be so many differences of opinion, and the greatest achievement of the No-changers will be when they make their so-called opponents their truest friends and convert them to the creed of the charkha. Believe me, if the No-changers leave the imputation and do their duty and swear by the charkha and die for it, they will make them converts to the creed. If people do not take to the charkha it is because they do not see its utility. It is for you to show it. I sing near the charkha because I have got that unquenchable faith in me that it will bring salvation to the country. The teaching of the Hindu religion is nothing if not faith. If you believe in the charkha supposing that it is not good for others, it is everything for us. The image of stone in Kashi Visvanath temple may be a stone to Maulana Hasrat Mohani.

MAULANA: I never feel like that.

When I go there my heart must melt. It is faith that counts. When I see a cow, it is not an animal to eat, it is a poem of pity for me and I worship it and I shall defend its worship against the whole world. God there is only one, but He enables me to see Him in a stone, in an Englishman and even in a traitor. I shall not hate even a traitor. My religion takes me to that length. I say to every No-changer, "If you are worthy of your creed and are non-violent, you will shake hands with Swarajist and say, 'Forgive us for what we have done.'" You have no right to harbour ill will against anyone or say a single word against him. Just follow that noble prescription, a nobler prescription I cannot give you. May God help you and enable you to follow that prescription and all will be well at the end of the year.

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-12-1924

379. TELEGRAM TO ANANTRAM

[Before *December 26, 1924*]¹

DIWAN ANANTRAM
REFUGEES CAMP
RAWALPINDI

PLEASE	SEND	LIST	FAMILIES	REFUGEES	WITH	THEIR
NEEDS.	HOPE	SOMEONE	COMING	BELGAUM.		

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 10517

¹ From the reference to Belgaum where the Congress session was held on December 26 and 27

381. OPENING SPEECH AT BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 26, 1924

The President, Mahatma Gandhi, walked down from the dais to the rostrum in loin-cloth and with khaddar in his hand amidst enthusiastic cheers. He hung up his bag on the rostrum, sat on a sufficiently high stool and kept his watch open in front of him. He was then presented by the chairman of the Reception Committee a copy of the *Karnatak, a Handbook* enclosed in a sandal-wood box, saying: "For your information, Sir". The President received the present amidst cheers . . . He then proceeded to address in Hindi. For ten minutes he made a speech in Hindi, which is as follows:

MR. GANGADHARRAO¹, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,²

I shall not abuse the great honour you have accorded me by giving you a long lecture. What I want to say from this rostrum is known to all of you. My speech, or address or lecture, whatever you call it, has been translated and printed in Hindi, Canarese, Marathi and English.³ I had requested Mr. Gangadharrao to see that you all had copies of it by yesterday evening. I hope it has reached all of you and you have read it thoroughly.

I wish merely to say this: that we are today faced with a situation where what we had set out to accomplish in 1920-21 we were not able to accomplish, while among us disunity and ill feeling have raised their head. Hindus and Muslims consider each other enemies and indulge in physical violence. It is hardly necessary to say that this is not the way to secure swaraj. We, Hindus, look down on the untouchables and consider it sinful to touch them. We thus think that they are impure. But in this we commit a sin before God, a sin of the greatest magnitude. It is true that for three or four years now we have accepted it that everyone, big and small, should ply the charkha; and we have been saying in the Congress, in the All-India Congress Committee, that it is our intention to secure swaraj through the charkha. When I went to Poona in the course of the present campaign I said at a meeting⁴ that the Lokamanya had given us the first line of a

¹ Chairman of the Reception Committee

² From the report in Hindi

³ *Vide* "Presidential Address at Belgaum Congress", 26-12-1924.

⁴ *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Poona", 4-9-1924.

*sloka*¹, “Swaraj is our birthright”, and that it is my mission in life to complete the *sloka*. This is my belief. I repeat the statement here. If we desire swaraj, then the way to it is through the charkha, yarn, and khaddar. I regret to say that while you know it you do not act on it. I neither know nor can think of anything else. I therefore tell you, brothers and sisters, that it is futile for me to appear before you and make speeches, it does not lead anywhere, it is wasting your time and my own time which I consider valuable for I deem myself a servant of God. I know that we cannot get swaraj in this way. Begum Mahomed Ali said to me once that whenever she goes to attend a Congress session, for about a week she has the feeling that we have already got swaraj. It means that we put on an act of swaraj. It is like seeing someone play the part of Harishchandra who is of course not Harishchandra. We do not know whether the player who acts Harishchandra is truthful or not. This celebration of swaraj has similarly become a play-acting. That is why I say to you, brothers, Deshbandhu Das is moving a resolution; accept the resolution only if you agree with it. If you do not agree with it you should reject it. There is no reference in it to Hindu-Muslim unity, nor is it concerned with untouchability. All that it says is that we wish to ply the charkha. I ask you all who have come here as delegates—untouchables, Christians or others—if you really represent those that you claim to represent and if you uphold the pledge of Mahomed Ali and Das, to do whatever you want to do with God in your sight. If you feel that it is not right, that Gandhi is deceiving you, then by all means reject it, have nothing to do with it. But if you take a pledge, if you accept this resolution—for I consider accepting is taking a pledge—and then do not keep to it, I leave you to yourselves. If the country thinks Gandhi is mad, discard him. Think again. Do you feel India is fit for swaraj? What does the world have to say about one who violates a pledge? Well, he may read the Bible, or the *Granth Saheb*, or the Koran, in your eyes he will be a leper, a good-for-nothing, a false coin, a counterfeit rupee. If you take a false coin to a shop the Government will haul you up for it. This is what I wish to tell you. I do not mean to mislead you, I do not mean to play a game with you. I tell you what I think and feel. I am convinced that swaraj cannot come so long as the tens of millions of our brothers and sisters do not take to the charkha, do not spin, do not make khadi and wear it. So long

¹ Sanskrit verse form

as this does not come about, the utter poverty of India cannot be eradicated. There will be no swaraj so long as the tens of millions of the country's destitutes have not got their bread.

You can have swaraj only on this condition. I have made a compact with Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, and I have placed it before the whole country. I believe there is nothing wrong in what I want; I accept their right to what they want. I hold that we can gain nothing through the Councils; but there are big leaders who believe that something or other can be gained through the Councils and that if we do nothing else we can at least go into the Councils. It is true enough. I must say that if they see some advantage in going into the Councils they should do so. They too are leaders of the country. Who am I to say no to them? It is in the compact that those who so wish may go into the Councils. It does not mean that non-co-operators should also follow them. The Congress belongs equally to Pro-changers and No-changers. It is a false notion that it belongs exclusively to either. Therefore they will go [into the Councils] on behalf of the Congress.

I said it is a false notion. But it is dangerous to argue that the notion that I am right and others are wrong should also be done away with. So long as there are different minds in the world there will also be different opinions. But we wish to embrace all, to promote tolerance—it is part of ahimsa.

But, as I said, it is a small matter. The most important thing in the pledge is the charkha. If you do not believe in the science of charkha, if you do not have faith in khadi and if you believe further that the new franchise will weaken the Congress, you should give up the charkha.

Brothers, I have addressed to you these few words in my lame and broken Hindi. I am sorry to see that a number of our brethren from Karnatak and the South come and say: "Speak in English." It is a matter of pain. Ever since I came to India I have been saying that at least in the Congress, when we speak about swaraj, we should do so in Hindi. But to our misfortune our education has become so faulty and so much lethargy has crept in that we do not make as much effort towards this as is demanded. If even now I could be convinced that those of our brethren who have come from Tamilnad or Karnatak can understand my broken Hindi, I would go from here satisfied. But I know that is not the case. Yes, I am forgetting something. I am forgetting Deshbandhu Das. Bengal is also contributing towards this sin. I wish God had given me the power to learn the language in

which Rabindranath Tagore has created such fine literature and I could address my Bengali brethren in that language. But that was not to be.

Now I have only one request to make. Please understand it. All I had to say in Hindi I have said; you have understood the purport of the resolution. He¹ will come and say what he wants to. He will not read the text of the resolution. Please do not press him to. For the convenience of the delegates I had asked Jawaharlal and Gangadharrao to see that they all had copies of the resolution. So you will all have received it. (Voices of "No, no.") How many such are there? (A great many voices are raised.) Well, I have explained it to you. I have told you what it contains (Laughter.). You will all read it. It will be there in the newspapers. It is merely this. It expresses the desire of Swarajists Pro-changers—and No-changers to live in unity. Our views are different but our hearts beat together. If you are a No-changer you must have the same place in your heart for Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal and Kelkar and others as you have for me. If you are a Swarajist you must have the same respect for me as you have for any of them. This is what Hindu-Muslim unity is. The meaning of Hindu-Muslim unity is that if I am a *santan* I will have as much place in my heart for Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali or any other Muslim as I have for Malaviyaji, even if the former treats us as enemy. Strange, you will think—Malaviyaji on one side and the Mussulman who treats us as enemy on the other. But if I have learnt anything from my reading of the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Ramayana*, it is this.

So you will now read the resolution and hear what he has to say. Do not compel him to read out the resolution. . . .

Continuing his remarks in English, the President said:

FRIENDS,

I do not propose to keep you longer than ten minutes. I had given myself no more than half an hour and I have taken more time than I had intended to in Hindustani. As you have all received copies of my address in the several necessary languages for our purpose, I do not propose to read any part of that address. It will tax your patience, it will waste your time and my time, and so I am avoiding to read that address. We want to go through the work that lies before us as quickly as possible. Desh-

¹ C. R. Das

bandhu Das will presently place before you the central resolution. If you reject that resolution you should go your way and do what you think best for you and for the country and permit me to do that work which I consider best for me, namely, to spin. I urge you, every one of you, to ponder over what is going to be placed before you.

A revolutionary change is being proposed before the nation, a change, I think, as Lalaji has said, as revolutionary as the change embarked upon by the nation under his Presidency in 1920 at the Special Session at Calcutta. I even admit with him that the change that I have proposed and placed before the nation is possibly more revolutionary still. And, therefore, I make bold to say that it is calculated to bring you within measurable distance of swaraj if you will whole-heartedly accept that resolution and give effect to it; for the days when we could be satisfied with merely passing resolutions and then forgetting all about them are gone. This resolution is not addressed to the nation in a vague manner but to everybody who has a will to work. This resolution is specifically addressed to every man and every woman of understanding who graces this audience by his or her presence this afternoon. And, though Deshbandhu Das and Maulana Mahomed Ali will not ask you to pass this resolution, keeping God as witness, I ask you to do that. And when you begin to vote upon that resolution, please remember and understand, you will be passing that resolution with God as witness. It would mean that you are undertaking to do something for the nation, for the poorest of the country, for the attainment of swaraj; and if you have no conviction about it in you, then I would urge you to reject that resolution.

It should not matter to you that my personality is behind that resolution. I have said repeatedly that I am not an infallible being. I have admitted repeatedly that I am a fallible being. I have repeatedly admitted that I have sometimes in my life committed Himalayan blunders. I have made penance for them. An infallible being is a perfect person. He does not need to perform penance. He does not need to repent, because he is incapable of folly. He need not argue. I am just as good or as bad a mortal as any one of you. And therefore, I want you to dismiss my personality from the equation and find the true answer to the equation.

The resolution is a momentous one. I know there is a large body of opinion against it. There is one body of opinion which says, "It is not proper to pin our faith entirely on spinning."

Another body says that spinning is good but it is a long-drawn-out agony. And a third says, "Although khaddar and hand-spinning are good in themselves, they can have no place in national franchise." I hold views absolutely contrary to them. And my conviction is growing upon me day by day, so much so that if I had all time to myself I would be spinning away every hour and feel that every revolution of the charkha was bringing swaraj nearer and nearer to us. Multiply that revolution by 300 million and you imagine the momentum that is set free for the attainment of swaraj. But that momentum you will set free only if you have the conviction that fires me in its efficacy for the attainment of swaraj.

There are many things that I have said in my address. Srimati Sarojini Devi has asked me to touch upon one thing; and out of regard for her who has rendered such splendid service in South Africa I do so now. That is Hindu-Muslim unity. Maulana Shaukat Ali says, "I am tired of the whole business. Let us simply leave alone Hindu-Muslim riots wherever they happen." There is a good deal of wisdom in that big head; it is not all fat, I tell you (Laughter.). Repeatedly he has said, "These Mussalmans of mine have become idiots. They have become demented. Similarly your Hindus also have become idiotic. We are trying to decide their disputes and in trying to do so we are allowing swaraj to slip through our hands. So let us leave them alone." But how can I do so? Hindu-Muslim unity, like the charkha, is a madness with me; it is a passion with me. I cannot possibly leave it and forget all about it. So also, you see, I dote on that little girl, Gulnar. "Why does this man dote upon her?" you may ask. "With a reason," say I. This girl when she grows will think of one Gandhi who though a *sanatani* Hindu that would not share meat with her, would not touch beef himself, used to let others eat it if they liked, although he himself worshipped the cow. I might die by the time that girl reaches the year of maturity. When she grows up she will transmit my message. She is today pure and innocent. She thinks everything is right. She knows nothing of hatred. She is all love. I find in her love personified. Therefore, I have been treating her as my very flesh and blood in spite of the sea that divides her from me. I am trying to unite myself with the Mussalmans by this means. She thinks that her Koran makes it lawful for her to kill the cow, while my religion enjoins upon me not to kill the cow. Who am I under the circumstances to prevent her from killing the cow? I would be denying my religion if I did so. But I wish to conquer her by preaching love. I will tell her, "The Koran does not pledge you to kill the cow or eat beef; my religion not

only does not permit it, my Koran compels me to worship the cow. You may eliminate the worship of the cow but you may tolerate *my* abstention from beef, you may tolerate *my* worship of the cow. Out of friendly regard for me you can abstain from killing the cow.” That is the secret of my love for the little girl, Gulnar. That is why I allow myself to be carried in the pocket of Maulana Shaukat Ali. Why do I not think of Malaviyaji? Simply because my worship of Malaviyaji is spontaneous. But I am partial to Mussalmans. How can I do otherwise? When you are partial to the Mussalmans you will reach the proper conclusion, proper answer to this equation. If anybody were to say, “Solve this equation, what the Hindus and the Mussalmans should do?” I would say, it is the duty of every Hindu to be partial to the Mussalmans and of every Mussalman to be partial to the Hindus. I find that there is a seer who wants to see God or to meet God in one way and I in another way and, therefore, everything that he does I look askance. Then I say to myself, I must be partial and when I have done that I shall be just. I like to ask the Mussalmans to do that—to be partial to the Hindus.

One thing more she (Mrs. Naidu) asks me to say. It is about the Liberals. “Are you going to say anything about the Liberals?” I can simply say, I worship the Liberals. I want the Liberals to come in the Congress just as much as I want the Swarajists to do so. My heart is laid bare to them. We want to sit and spin at the charkha. “No,” they say, “we don’t like to sit at the charkha and won’t spin.” I say, “What shall I do?” If they say, “We won’t go to charkha,” I simply say to them, “Enter the Congress and drive me out of it.”

I have finished. With God as witness I want you to say that whatever you decide to do you will fulfil it even though you may have to die. (Applause.)

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 13-6

382. *PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT BELGAUM CONGRESS*¹

December 26, 1924

FRIENDS,

It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments both internal and external have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset, let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi-Amma, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramania Iyer and Mr. Dalbahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs Rustomjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

RETROSPECTIVE

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so, because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of government. The breach of faith with the Mussalmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the Government. The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of the system. At the same time it was realized that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation, whether conscious or unconscious and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the view therefore of mending or ending the system it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary co-operation from the top. At the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920, the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were

¹ This printed address appears to have been prepared before December 18; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 18-12-1924.

more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-co-operation movement. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institutions boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not non-co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite, however, of this grave defect I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-co-operation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-co-operation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-co-operation has not brought us swaraj, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-co-operation as a means of attaining political freedom has come to stay and that even its partial success has brought us nearer swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

A HALT

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For, whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-co-operation, the majority of those who are immediately concerned have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Councils have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council-entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances, these boycotts cannot be worked as part of

the national programme, unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-co-operators out. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hostilely criticizing the other. What is applicable to Hindu-Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-co-operation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word "boycott" has been changed in the agreement into "refusal to use foreign cloth". There is no doubt a bad odour about the word "boycott". It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasizes the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness, etc., are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from goodwill and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that

has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan, therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers, to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and, for that matter, even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus, boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, i.e., khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money, but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organization of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organization. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is today the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply for instance intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

BRITAIN'S DUTY

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to

regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

FOREIGN *v.* BRITISH

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth, and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

But, say the critics, the spinning-wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning-wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time.

The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances, it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning-wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning-wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

MACHINERY

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning-wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad.

SPINNING FRANCHISE

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning-wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the Swaraj Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

NO OTHER MESSAGE

I have thus dilated upon the spinning-wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of swaraj if it is to be by "peaceful and legitimate means". As I have already remarked it is the only

substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by civil disobedience. But civil disobedience for the attainment of swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning-wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning-wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say "No". Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards swaraj.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning-wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for swaraj is almost universally accepted. I say "almost" because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussalman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat's Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was

minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a swaraj government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no swaraj government with any pretension to being a popular government can possibly be organized and maintained on a war footing. A swaraj government means a government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. Hindus and Mussalmans, if they desire swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majority must set the example of self-sacrifice.

UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability is another hindrance to swaraj. Its removal is just as essential for swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindustan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot, the better it is for us Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchables. And Hindus who are Congressmen have to see to it that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vykom satyagrahis are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage and faith. Any movement in which these qualities are exhibited becomes irresistible.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees nowadays of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us "superior" Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our down-trodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. The religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is Light, not darkness. God is Love, not hate. God is Truth, not untruth. God alone is Great. We His creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognize the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of religion or sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of self or irreligion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win swaraj or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope to revive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

SWARAJ SCHEME

But the spinning-wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagwandas that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of swaraj, i.e., the scheme of swaraj which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All Parties Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such for example as suggested for the Congress franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the Government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of these panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbrous and worn-out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the civil and military service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in self-governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examination for the civil and military service to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of international diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power today to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme, let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

INDEPENDENCE

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world

desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

THE SWARAJ PARTY

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about the status of equality given to the Swaraj Party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the party is not worthy, but because I do not share its views about Council-entry. But if I must remain in the Congress and even lead it, I must recognize facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. But it was not, so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step. The Swaraj Party represents, if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress on the issue of its status, I was bound to agree to its conditions so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion unreasonable. The Swarajists want to use the name of the Congress for their policy. A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the No-changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility both financial and executive with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehended no No-changer can, I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. And heart can only go where belief is. I know that the sole

authority to the Swaraj Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The Swaraj Party cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work from within to affect the course of the country's politics. Dr. Besant has led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come in hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, for the Hindus, removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what they want?

PURELY SOCIAL REFORM?

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organization. I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for swaraj is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have otherwise described it, the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentious and not absolutely essential for swaraj as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to khaddar the running of national educational institutions has been the most successful. These cannot be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-co-operation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should

be made to maintain and strengthen them. Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a national university maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000 and having control of three colleges and 70 schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Ahmedabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323 in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-co-operating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a worldly standpoint they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national standpoint they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab. The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions, however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and girls studying in these national institutions. I therefore regard the upkeep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions to be truly national must be clubs for promoting real Hindu-Muslim unity, they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert spinners and weavers. If the Congress retains its belief in the potency of the spinning-wheel and khaddar, one has a right to expect these institutions to supply the science of the spinning-wheel. They should be also factories for khaddar production. This is not to say that the boys and the girls are not to have any literary training. But I do maintain that the training of the hand and the heart must go hand-in-hand with that of the head. The quality and the usefulness of a national school or college will be measured not by the brilliance of the literary attainments of its scholars but by the strength of the national character, and deftness in handling the carding-bow, the spinning-wheel and the loom. Whilst I am most anxious that no national school or college should be closed, I should have not the slightest hesitation in closing down a school or college that is indifferent to the admission of non-Hindu boys or that shuts its door against the entry of untouchables or that has not carding and spinning as an indispensable part of the training. The time is past when we can be satisfied with the word "national" on the signboard of the school and the knowledge that it is not affiliated to any Government

university or is not otherwise controlled by the Government. I must also not omit to point out that the tendency in many national institutions still is to neglect the vernaculars and Hindustani. Many teachers have not realized the necessity of imparting instruction through the vernaculars or Hindustani. I rejoice to observe that Sjt. Gangadharrao has arranged a meeting of national educationists to exchange experiences on the several points mentioned by me and to evolve, if possible, a general plan of education and action.

UNEMPLOYED NON-CO-OPERATORS

This is perhaps the proper place to mention those lawyers who have given up practice, and schoolmasters and other Government employees who have given up Government service at the call of the nation. I know that there are many such men who find it hard to make the two ends meet. They deserve national support. The Khadi Board and the national schools and colleges are the two services that can take in almost an unlimited number of honest and industrious men who are willing to learn and labour and are satisfied with a modest allowance. I observe a tendency not to accept any remuneration for national service. This desire to serve without remuneration is praiseworthy, but all cannot satisfy it. Every labourer is worthy of his hire. No country can produce thousands of unpaid whole-time workers. We must therefore develop an atmosphere in which a patriot would consider it an honour to serve the country and accept an allowance for such service.

INTOXICANTS

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would today have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketing degenerated into violence, veiled when it was not open. Picketing had, therefore, to be abandoned, and the liquor shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and selfless service in the cause of temperance. We must, however, realize that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have swaraj. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council-entry by Congressmen, if they would boldly sweep out this revenue even

though education may have to be starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the military expenditure.

BENGAL REPRESSION

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments.

But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely (though it may be adversely) than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will, or we may succumb to them to our disadvantage. The latest act of the rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All Parties Conference condemned it in no uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that the blow was aimed at the Bengal Swaraj Party. But I have none. I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the Swaraj party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is

1. that the situation they describe has not been proved to exist;
2. that assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease;
3. that the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation; and lastly
4. that even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of Their Excellencies evade these issues altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements not because they are wilfully untruthful, but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to

us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated or be impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of swaraj; for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold. In 1921, we answered repression with civil disobedience and invited the Government to do its worst. But today we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We are not ready for civil disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for civil disobedience means discipline, self-restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose, we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting, we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey whether of God or man, we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Mussalmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for civil disobedience—the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu-Muslim fights are our training for it. And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence: "You are retarding India's progress. If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organized than you are. You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives, if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence?"

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must therefore find the remedy and demonstrate to both the violent Government and the violent revolutionaries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence.

REPRESSION A SYMPTOM

I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as White *v.* Black. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the "white man's burden". In the Malaya peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would today drive out every Indian, if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers. The Government of India has not shown even the decency to publish the report of its own Commission on Fiji.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Sahib, Guruka-Bagh, and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other, or in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

NEED FOR SANCTION

The Congress, therefore, to be worthy of its trust must devise a sanction to back its demands. Before we can forge the sanction, we Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, etc.,

must unite and so should Swarajists, No-changers, Liberals, Home Rulers, Muslim Leaguers and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind, it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.

MY FAITH

Let me state my faith; as a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot—will not—do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called satyagraha. It is my *kalpadruma*—*Jam-i-Jam*—the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. Ahimsa or non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of that Truth. This satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through satyagraha. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that satyagraha never fails and that one perfect satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

Young India, 26-12-1924

383. *SPEECH ON CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION,
BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 26, 1924

It was 4.05 p.m. when the President moved the first resolution. He said:

I shall now read the first resolution. After I read the resolution, you will kindly stand. It is incredibly simple; our condolence to those who are no longer with us.

This Congress records with sorrow the deaths of Bi-Amma, Sir Ashutosh Chowdhari, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramania Ayyar, Mr. Dalbahadur Giri, Mr. Govind Venkatesh Yalgi, Mr. Vamana Rao Moharir, Mr. T. V. Gopalswami Mudaliar, Mr. C. V. P. Shivam and Lala Kanhya Lalji and also of Messrs Rustomjee Jeevanji Ghorkhodu and P. K. Naidu in South Africa and tenders its respectful sympathy to the bereaved families.

Then the President explained the resolution in Hindi.¹

This resolution expresses our sorrow at the passing of Bi-Amma and others and conveys our sympathies to their relatives. I know none amongst us can have anything to say against this. You will therefore all stand up for a few minutes and resume your seats when I sit down. This will indicate our acceptance of the resolution.

All stood up. A murmur was heard somewhere upon which Gandhiji said:

All of you in the centre should stand up. There should be no one sitting. And please maintain silence. No one should speak. If we want to show the respect we feel for the dead we should stand in silence for a few seconds. . . . Now please take your seats.

C. R. Das mounted the rostrum amid great applause. "Deshbandhu Das", Gandhiji announced. Then he added:

Malaviyaji has just sent me a message. I am sorry I forgot about it. Lala Kanhya Lal of Lahore passed away this year. You must all have heard about Lala Kanhya Lal. He was an old man and he served the country well during the Dyer regime.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 9-13

¹ What follows is from a report of the proceedings in Hindi.

384. *RESOLUTION ON CALCUTTA AGREEMENT AND
SPINNING FRANCHISE, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 26, 1924

(a) (i) The Congress hereby endorses the following agreement between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swaraj Party on the other.

THE AGREEMENT¹

(ii) The Congress hopes that the agreement will result in true unity between the two wings of the Congress and will also enable persons belonging to other political organizations to join the Congress. The Congress congratulates the Swarajists and others arrested under the New Ordinance or Regulation III of 1818 and is of opinion that such arrests are inevitable so long as the people of India have not the capacity for vindicating their status and liberty, and is further of opinion that such capacity can in the present circumstances of the country be developed by achieving the long-deferred exclusion of foreign cloth; and therefore as a token of the earnestness and determination of the people to achieve this national purpose, welcomes the introduction of hand-spinning as part of the franchise and appeals to every person to avail himself or herself of it and join the Congress.

(iii) In view of the foregoing, the Congress expects every Indian, man and woman, to discard all foreign cloth and to use and wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of all other cloth. With a view to accomplish the said purpose without delay, the Congress expects all Congress members to help the spread of hand-spinning and the antecedent processes and the manufacture and sale of khaddar.

(iv) The Congress appeals to the Princes and the wealthy classes of India and the members of political and other organizations not represented on the Congress, and municipalities, local boards, panchayats and such other institutions, to extend their help to the spread of hand-spinning by personal use and otherwise and especially by giving liberal patronage to the classes of artists, still surviving and capable of working artistic designs in fine khaddar.

¹ Not reproduced here; for the text of the Agreement *vide* "Joint Statement with Swaraj Party Leaders", 6-11-1924.

(v) The Congress appeals to the merchants engaged in the foreign cloth and yarn trade to appreciate the interests of the nation and discontinue their importation of foreign cloth and yarn and help the national cottage industry by dealing in khaddar.

(vi) It having come to the notice of the Congress that varieties of cloth are manufactured in mills and on other looms out of mill yarn and sold in the Indian market as khaddar, the Congress appeals to the mill-owners and other manufacturers concerned, to discontinue this undesirable practice and further appeals to them to encourage the revival of the ancient cottage industry of India by restricting their operations among those parts of the country that have not yet come under the Congress influence and appeals to them to discontinue the importation of foreign yarn.

(vii) The Congress appeals to the heads and leaders of all religious denominations whether Hindu, Muslim or any other to preach to their congregations the message of khaddar and advise them to discontinue the use of foreign cloth.

(b) The present Article VII¹ of the Constitution to be repealed and the following to be substituted therefor:

(i) Every person not disqualified under article IV² shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organization controlled by the Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organization who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business and does not make a contribution of 20,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per year of his or her own spinning, or in the case of illness or unwillingness or any such cause, the same quantity of yarn spun by any other person; provided also that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organizations at one and the same time.

(ii) The year of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to the 31st December. The said subscription shall be payable in advance and may be paid in instalments of 2,000 yards per month payable in advance. Members joining in the middle of the year shall contribute the full quantity due from the beginning of the year.

¹ Which read: "Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of 4 annas per year shall be entitled to become a member of any organization controlled by the Provincial Congress Committees." *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 192.

² *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 191.

TRANSITORY PROVISION

During 1925, the subscription shall be 20,000 yards only and shall be payable on or before 1st March or in instalments as aforesaid.

(iii) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates or any committee or sub-committee of any Congress organization whatsoever, or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meetings of the Congress or any Congress organization or any committee or sub-committee thereof, if he has not contributed the yarn subscription or the instalments due. Any member who has made default in the payment of the yarn subscription may have his or her rights restored by paying the subscription in respect of which the default has occurred and the instalment for the month then current.

(iv) Every Provincial Congress Committee shall send to the General Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, from month to month returns of membership and of the yarn received by it in virtue of this Article. The Provincial Congress Committee shall contribute ten per cent of the yarn subscriptions or their value to the All-India Congress Committee.

(v) Omit present Article VI (c)¹ and Article IX (b)²
Proposed by:

DESHBANDHU C. R. DAS (in English)

Seconded by :

SJT. S. V. KAUJALGI (Both in Kanarese and English)

SJT. N. C. KELKAR (in Marathi)

SJT. S. V. ABHYANKAR (in English)

PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU (in English)

Opposed by:

MAULANA HASRAT MOHANI (in Urdu)

MAULANA AZAD SOBHANI (in Urdu)

SWAMI GOVINDANANDA (in English)

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 1-5

¹ & ² *Vide* Vol. XIX, pp. 192-3.

385. *SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON CALCUTTA
AGREEMENT, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 26, 1924

The resolution was moved by Deshbandhu C. R. Das. There were many speakers on the resolution and when Swami Govindananda finished his speech, the President said:

I shall not try your patience for any length of time. I have got two speakers more. I am endeavouring to give chance, if I can possibly do, to those who oppose this resolution. I may now call upon one more speaker to oppose the resolution and then I shall ask Pandit Motilal Nehru to wind up. I call upon Sardar Ali Sabri from Cawnpore. Is he here?

A reply: "Not here." Then Pandit Motilal Nehru came to speak. . . . It was 7.25 p.m. when the debate on the resolution was closed. The President then rose amidst loud and continued cries of *Mahatma Gandhiki jai* to put the resolution to vote. He spoke in Hindi announcing the timings of the sittings of the Congress and other conferences, and with regard to the voting on the resolution he said:

BROTHERS,

Before I place before you this resolution I would like to read out the notes some friends have sent to me. One or two friends have said that as there have been so many speeches on behalf of the Swarajists and only one, that of Mahomed Ali, on behalf of the No-changers, Mr. Rajagopalachari should be asked to make a speech. I do not wish to give Mr. Rajagopalachari this trouble, although his name is there on the list. Because, as Panditji has said, I do not wish that anyone should be influenced to take a position. You may vote as you like. So I do not wish to trouble Mr. Rajagopalachari, much as the No-changers want that he speak something before the vote is taken.

A brother from Andhra says that he is a follower of Dr. Annie Besant and wants to say something in support of her. He wants to speak on her behalf because Dr. Annie Besant, although she was expected, has not come. Another friend has asked why we are proposing the whole resolution and why we don't move it in parts. Maulana Hasrat Mohani has answered this. This indicates an attitude of inaction. It does not come from the heart. If you want to you may vote, otherwise not. If you have a desire to take

up the charkha it is possible. There is another No-changer who also wants to speak but I do not wish to trouble him. So many Swarajists have spoken that there is now no time left. Several other friends have misgivings. I have their notes. The only way to remove their misgivings would be to give them some time to speak out their minds.

How much will the people benefit from the candour Deshbandhu Das and others have shown in their speeches? Mr. Abhyankar said his opinion differed from mine, yet he gave his support to the charkha. Panditji says he will trust the charkha as I do. It has been put down in writing and he will respect the written word. We should have faith that he will have no cause for misgivings. One thing is essential: that he should trust the No-changers and the No-changers should trust him. That there should be this mutual trust is put down here in writing and therefore I wish to have your views. It is necessary that both groups should treat one another as brothers. As Deshbandhu Das has said, we believe that one thing is good for the country; we believe also that the other thing will also be good for the country . . .¹ Mr. Kelkar in his speech used an image. I might use another and say that a cart will not run on a single wheel; it will run only when both its wheels are in shape and strong, otherwise it will collapse. I therefore appeal to you to purge your hearts. Maulana Shaukat Ali will come to you and say that you should become brave. Others will say other things. Only a cowardly man distrusts another man. The man who has courage will trust even his enemy. If you would accept this resolution give up distrusting one another; do away with all misgivings. Having said this much I wonder if it is still necessary to speak in English. I shall do so if some of you desire it, but I do not think it is necessary.

Now I place before you the resolution and ask for your verdict. But before you give your verdict let me remind you of what I have said : please treat it as a pledge—with yourselves, me and God as witnesses. It will be terrible indeed if anyone having taken the pledge should not act on it. You will ply the charkha. If you find it difficult and do not want to take the trouble, borrow the yarn from someone and tender it. If you are not prepared to do even this do not vote for the resolution. If you wish to work unitedly it is necessary to adopt this resolution. But if you do not want this, if you do not wish to mix the charkha with the franchise, please do not under any circumstances vote for the resolution. I

¹ The source is not clear here.

shall not mind it at all as I shall if you accept it and then do not go by it. I must therefore ask you that if you have any pity for me act on your word; you should not take it that there is any betrayal in not voting.

I propose this resolution and I hope you will not unanimously deceive God. I have come to know Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das well. When they once agree to a thing they do not say no afterwards. So you will either accept or reject this resolution. Even if you reject it you should be clear in your mind as to the importance of the charkha. I hold we can secure everything through the charkha. You should accept the resolution if you wish that the No-changers should love the Swarajists and the Swarajists should love the No-changers. Mr. Kelkar has said that there should be "responsive co-operation" from both sides. If you understand this and accept this, please raise your hands; if you do not accept this please do not raise your hands. In that case I shall think of some other method of making India free. Those who are in favour of the resolution may raise their hands.

The President said in English (before putting the resolution to vote):

Those who are in favour of this resolution, please raise your hands understanding the warning that I have given you that God be witness between you and India; if you accept the resolution and mean to work to the best of your ability, then alone will you raise your hands.

Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande said in Kanarese what the President had said.

In asking the House to raise hands, the President said:

Only delegates, please. Those only who have understood the resolution.

After examining the hands raised in favour and against the resolution, he said:

I declare the resolution carried.

The sitting of the Congress was adjourned for the next day at 11 o'clock sharp.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 70-2

390. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON UNTOUCHABILITY,
BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

I call upon Mr. Bhopatkar to move the resolution on untouchability.

Before doing so, let me inform you that some Tamil friends have written to me asking that the resolutions might also be translated into Tamil. I am extremely sorry that I cannot possibly do that. There are 21 provinces to deal with and if we are to render each resolution into so many languages it would really be not possible to get on. Up to now we have been adopting three languages: One is Hindi which everyone is expected to know; the second is English; and the third is the vernacular of the province. We have not been able to reach that common medium, Hindustani, through which we can know each other, because we have always the South to obstruct the way. That is why we are using the vernacular of this province as well as English. But I would suggest for such cases that those who know English or Hindustani in the said province should take the trouble of explaining the resolutions passed here to their friends who do not know any of the languages here spoken. . . . ¹

BROTHERS,

I am sorry to say that Panditji is not here at the moment. I had been asked—and I requested him to say something. He said he did not want to say anything. Then again I was told that he would say a few words. But at this time he is not here.

Before I put this resolution to vote I must answer a note that I have received. A friend asks if the resolution on removal of untouchability implies inter-dining and intermarriage with the untouchables. There is nothing in the resolution suggesting this, but if this friend wants to know what I myself feel in the matter I will say that I have expressed my views in *Navajivan* and *Young India*—namely, that we should behave with those we consider untouchables as we behave with other castes.

¹ After some speakers had supported the resolution the President called upon Madan Mohan Malaviya to speak. As he was absent, the President put the resolution to vote speaking in Hindi.

There was one hand raised against the resolution. The President declared it carried.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 95 & 98

391. *SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION, BELGAUM*¹

December 27, 1924

BROTHERS,

Before I move the next resolution I have an atonement to make. When the resolution on removal of untouchability was being moved I had it in mind to present an untouchable brother before you. I had received a note saying an untouchable brother who was not a delegate wanted to say a few words. I had felt that even though he was not a delegate it would be good to permit him to speak as he was an untouchable. And so I had wanted to call him. But I forgot. The only way I now can atone for it is to apologize to him. Anyway, it is good that I remembered in time.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 104-5

392. *SPEECH ON ANNIE BESANT'S STATEMENT, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 27, 1924

Now, before I proceed to the other resolutions I have to announce to you that Dr. Besant feels that she must make a statement before this House in connection with the resolution² we passed yesterday. I do not wish to anticipate what the illustrious lady has got to say. But I think I voice the feelings of this House when I tender my congratulations to her for gracing this *pandal* with her presence. Whether she and her devoted followers are able to remain in the Congress or not, I may

¹ Before permitting a *Panchama* boy to speak for two minutes

² *Vide* "Resolution on Calcutta Agreement and Spinning Franchise, Belgaum Congress", 26-12-1924.

hope that we will always have her sympathy and moral support with us. I now request Dr. Besant to make her statement

FRIENDS,

You have heard the statement that Dr. Besant has made. You will not expect me to make any remarks upon that statement. Dr. Besant has not made the statement, as I know, in order that she may have reply just now. She has made that statement from a sense of duty so that her silence might not be construed into meaning that we had her assent to the resolution that we passed yesterday. But I hope I may give her the assurance of this Congress that all that she has said will command our respectful attention and that no stone will be left unturned by this Congress or Congressmen and Congresswomen to open the door wide, as wide as is humanly possible, for the entrance of every party that has the interest of India at heart and every party whose goal is swaraj for India. With these words I close this incident, repeating my request to Dr. Besant that whether she and other parties are able to join the Congress or not, the Congress will always expect her and every party's sympathy and support in anything and everything that may commend itself to their attention.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 105 & 107-8

393. RESOLUTIONS MOVED FROM THE CHAIR, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

The President next moved the following resolutions one by one and put each to vote and declared each carried. The resolutions were read by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in English, by Sjt. Mudvedkar in Kanarese, and by Pandit Sundar Lal in Hindi.

RESOLUTION X: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Congress is strongly of opinion that the hope of the future of the country lies in its youth and therefore trusts that the Provincial Committees will strive more vigorously than they have done to keep alive all national educational institutions. But whilst the Congress is of opinion that existing national educational institutions should be maintained and new ones opened, the Congress does not regard any such institution to be national which does not employ some Indian language as the medium of instruction, and

which does not actively encourage Hindu-Muslim unity, education among untouchables and removal of untouchability; which does not make hand-spinning, carding and training in physical culture and self-defence obligatory; and in which teachers and students over the age of 12 years do not spin for at least half an hour per working day and in which students and teachers do not habitually wear khaddar.

RESOLUTION XI: PAID NATIONAL SERVICE

Whereas it has been discovered that many otherwise deserving men are unobtainable for national service because of their reluctance to accept remuneration for service, the Congress places on record its opinion that there is not only nothing derogatory to one's dignity in accepting remuneration for national service, but the Congress hopes that patriotic young men and women will regard it as an honour to accept maintenance for service faithfully rendered and that those needing or those willing to do service will prefer national to any other service.

RESOLUTION XII: CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION

In Article XI "Rs. 10" to be altered to "Re. 1".

In Article XXIII, add, after the first sentence ending with the word "Congress":

"The treasurers shall be in charge of the funds of the Congress and shall keep proper accounts of them. The general secretaries shall be in charge of the Office of the All-India Congress Committee and shall be responsible for the publication of the report of the proceedings of the preceding session of the Congress and of any special session held in the course of the year, in co-operation with the Reception Committee. Such report shall be published as soon as possible and not later than four months after the session, and shall be offered for sale."

Add at the end of article XXIII: "and published along with the next Congress report."

RESOLUTION XIII: DRINK AND OPIUM TRAFFIC

The Congress notes with satisfaction that notwithstanding the set back suffered by the campaign against the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs initiated in 1921, Congress workers in several parts of the country have continued it with vigour and determination. The Congress hopes that the peaceful endeavours of workers to wean those who are addicted to the drink or the opium habit from the

curse will receive further and greater strength and encouragement than hitherto.

The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habit of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India and would therefore welcome its abolition.

The Congress is further of opinion that the regulation by the Government of India of the opium traffic is detrimental not only to the moral welfare of India but of the whole world, and that the cultivation of opium in India which is out of all proportion to medical and scientific requirements should be restricted to such requirements.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 115-6 & 118

394. *SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON OFFICE-BEARERS,¹ BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 27, 1924

There are now only two things remaining—things that we always have to do, namely, the election of general secretaries and a treasurer and deciding on the venue for the next Congress. It will be desirable to leave this to the All-India Congress Committee, as was done last year. The treasurer is the same. The general secretaries will be: first, Pandit Jawaharlal; second, Qureshi; and third, Mr. Bharucha. Previously Dr. Kitchlew was there and Babu Rajendra Prasad was approached. Babu Rajendra Prasad has to attend to many kinds of activities and he cannot give all his time to our work. So the question of two new secretaries has come up. There was a great deal of discussion in the Subjects Committee on the matter yesterday and I had talks with the delegates. It was decided in the end that since I shall be the President of the Congress for this year and the next year, secretaries should be appointed from among the people who can help me in my work. A number of Swarajists and No-changers are there. How would it be to take them into the Working Committee? I also liked the idea—and I am willing to take into the Working Committee not one but all of them, but on one condition, namely, that they understand it clearly that there is only one national programme, that removal of untouchability, charkha, prohibition form one single

¹ The resolution was later put to vote and carried.

programme. I had said that if there be any Swarajist as staunchly believing in khadi as I do I should like to take him, for through him I should reform all the Swarajists. The moment they come and work with me we become united, that is if we wish to unite.

Thus the discussion went on. No one came in view.

The two persons suggested are not necessarily No-changers. I know a little bit about them which I should like to tell you. I know Shwaib Qureshi. He is an orthodox Muslim. But I have not taken him because of that. I want to take full-time work from secretaries. I therefore told Maulana Shaukat Ali that if Shwaib Sahib would be willing to give me all his time I would like to have him. He agreed. He is the kind of man who once he makes a promise carries out that promise. He has a love for khadi, this also I know.

Bharucha is a crank. I am a crank too. So we shall get on splendidly. I shall have to learn from him to carry bundles of khadi on my shoulder and go hawking. He has become a specialist in this. It is his wish to see khadi reach every part of the country. Not one but hundreds of Bharuchas are required thus to sell khadi. Bharucha went to Lala Harkishen Lal, he went to others, and gave them khadi. Even if people swear at him he does not mind it. The secretaries we need today should be such that they will sell khadi even if they are abused. They should be able to put up with any kind of insult for the sake of khadi. I have therefore selected these two. But though I have done my selection the final say is yours. The Subjects Committee has of course agreed. But the constitution of the Congress requires that you express your opinion. Those of you who accept these names should come out with their opinion. About the treasurer nothing needs to be said. You say if you like the man.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 116-7

396. *CONCLUDING SPEECH AT BELGAUM
CONGRESS*

December 27, 1924

In bringing the proceedings of the session to a close the President delivered a most impassioned address, first in Hindi and then in English . . .

BROTHERS,

I now wish to tell you that whatever gratitude I may feel for you will be wholly inadequate. I do not think any president can expect a greater amount of love than you have shown me. You willingly did all the work that I wanted you to do for me. When I bid you observe silence, you observed silence. You listened to any speech I wanted to make. You wanted me to deliver a written oration. When I wanted to be excused you did not press. And just as you expressed your opinions here quietly, without being noisy, in the Subjects Committee also there was no disturbance. In fact there might have been disturbance when the bomb of the charkha was dropped in your midst, but you raised no objection and in the Subjects Committee also behaved with perfect decorum. I feel this kindness of my brethren to me must be the result of some good deed I may have done in an earlier life. It is my wish that the kindness you have shown towards me you should show towards India, for if I wish to live it is only for India and if I wish to die it is also only for India. Not a leaf stirs without God's will. But every man has a right to ask of God just as a child asks of his father what he wants. I have seen that He even grants what I ask Him. What God has willed cannot be otherwise.

I therefore appeal to you, brothers, to gird up your loins for the service of India and stick to the pledge you have taken. I know I took the chair here as President and all of you gave me your love. I desire, naturally, that everyone should praise me, but it does not lead to any achievement. The achievement will come when all of you act as you have pledged. I do not believe that all these tasks are beyond our strength—the third task or the fourth or fifth—none of them.

Listening to the speech of Bhopatkar gave me a pleasant surprise. He demanded if we wanted the destruction of Hinduism that we treat men as untouchables. I was very pleased. And three shastris have just told you that there is no sanction in Hinduism for untouchability as it is practised. Is it the same thing as when

we say that Hindus and Muslims should not treat one another as enemies but as brothers? Did you not hear what Shaukat Ali said? What did Lajpat Rai say? Zafar Ali Khan raised an objection. I do not see anything to object to, but he is not an enemy of India. You should treat no one as enemy. The urge in your heart should be to make a brother of an enemy.

Lalaji has invoked a principle, namely, that the question is of the human species as a whole. It is not confined to any particular religion. He said if a Hindu became mad should not a Mussalman swear at him? If Mussalmans abused Ramachandra and Krishna should not Hindus abuse the Prophet? If you cannot decide this matter by forgiving, go to a court or a panchayat. I am a non-co-operator, but if a Mussalman abuses Lord Krishna I will say, "Go to a court, but do not fight. There is nothing in this to fight over." It does not require much time to accept this principle. There should be a fever in us for swaraj, our hearts should burn for it. When Bhopatkar was speaking I thought of Lokamanya. He was the genius of swaraj. A remarkable thing I heard about him is that when his wife lay dying he was busy in his work for swaraj. If such volcanoes are created in our hearts we can do the third thing, the fourth thing and everything else. That you should wear khadi when you come to Congress is nothing big. That we should give up wearing foreign cloth is nothing big. Today I do not talk about burning foreign cloth. I am today not the man who in 1921 had caused foreign cloth to be burnt. But we have left peaceful ways. If even today we can bring about complete peace I can again take up what we did in 1921. Under the pretext of burning foreign cloth we heaped stones to throw at people.

I know we cannot simultaneously do both: invoke truth and practise untruth. If we invoke truth we must not practise untruth, or our bodies will burn up. It burns my heart certainly. I cannot bear it if someone falsely swears by God or takes false pledges. Abuse me by all means, beat me, kick me with shoes, spit at me, I give you my word that I shall not get angry. But take a pledge and not act on it and anger will burn away my whole body. I should wish to die if a woman who is unchaste should parade her chastity in front of me. I should wish to die, again, if a man who is impure should parade his purity in front of me. I would not wish to witness it. If you want that the love you have shown me, the kindness you have done me in placing the mantle of responsibility on me, should continue, you should understand this well; keep me in this position if you want to. But it will be even better if the Swarajists and No-changers should walk in unison. As Dr. Besant

said, one single stick, by itself, easily breaks, but in a bundle it is very strong.

Let us not think that the Swarajists are bad people. To a pure heart all hearts are pure. What are the qualities of the soul? The soul is like marble. Shankaracharya has said that blemishes are not native to it. Blemishes are *maya*¹. If your heart acquires strength you will be able to remove blemishes from others without thinking evil of them. If treachery is the reward of trust, will the man who trusts come to harm? Only the one who commits treachery will come to harm. If I say to Jawaharlal that he is more than a son to me and if I say it only to take some work from him, it is deception. Who am I to venerate Jawaharlal? The world will venerate him, shower flowers on him.

Today I have to say—not to the one alone or the other alone but to both: During this one year work so hard that our strength should be increased and we should be able to feel that swaraj is at last within our reach.

Addressing next in English the President said:

I have just poured out my heart to you in my Hindi speech. It is impossible for me to reproduce what I have said in Hindi. One thing however I want to say. I do not think that any chairman, any president, could possibly claim greater courtesy, greater attention and greater affection than you the delegates have extended to me. I assure you that it has been the greatest delight to me to preside over your deliberations here in the Congress and in the Subjects Committee. Every one of you have readily responded to every call that I have made upon you. I know that I have put a heavy strain upon you. I have not walked you. I know I have run you. But what can I do? You are impatient and I am impatient. We want to march towards swaraj and our march for swaraj has got to be, not at a snail's pace, but a double quick march; and if we do want to work and march forward, I cannot afford to waste a single minute of your time and my time. Therefore, I have put on speed to the best of my ability and it has been a wonder to me—it has given to me the greatest satisfaction that you have so readily responded to me, so nobly! And you have not done this thing charily but with a magnificent generosity. No one could have possibly claimed more, asked for more, and got more. You have given me all that I could possibly ask of you.

But what I now want to ask you for, is something more, something better, something richer, and that is this: Transfer all

¹ Cosmic illusion

this noble affection, all this generosity that you have shown to me to the thing that you and I hold dear, to the thing that alone binds you and me together and that is swaraj. If we want swaraj, we must know the conditions of swaraj. You have endorsed the conditions in the resolutions. Every one of you knows those conditions. Do not leave these conditions here. Take them away with you and fulfil them to the letter and to the spirit and insist upon others to fulfil those conditions, not by force but by love. Exert all the influence and all the pressure which love can exert, upon everyone that surrounds you and upon your neighbours. Go throughout your district and spread this message of khaddar, spread this message of Hindu-Muslim unity and spread this message against¹ untouchability. Go hand in hand with the youngsters of the country and make them the real soldiers of swaraj.

But you will not do it if the Swarajists and No-changers still bear malice against each other, if they still have jealousies against one another. It will be possible only if you bury hatred, leave all the jealousies and anger, all those bad influences here. I ask you to bury the hatchet. Bury the jealousies underground and cremate them wherever you like. But take away the sacred resolution that you have passed and say, "Let the heavens fall, but the bond that binds us today, the tie that has bound the Swarajists and the No-changers, shall never snap." My work is finished.

Scarcely had the President got down the rostrum when he was reminded of the duty of the Congress to thank the Reception Committee, and he re-entered the rostrum and said:

I would not have forgiven myself if I had not tendered my thanks to the noble volunteers trained by Dr. Hardikar and to the members of the Reception Committee. But in the mad passion for swaraj I forgot all about the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

I know that they have not served in order to receive thanks. The noble service that they have rendered is its own reward. But it was due from me and I would have been guilty of a breach of duty to you if I had not returned thanks to all of you. May God bless all the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 119-22

¹The source has "of".

397. *SPEECH AT UNTOUCHABILITY CONFERENCE,
BELGAUM*

[December 27, 1924]

The following is a free rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the Untouchability Conference held at Belgaum during the Congress week:

FRIENDS,

It was hardly necessary to ask me to express my views on the subject of untouchability. I have declared times without number from various public platforms that it is the prayer of my heart that if I should fail to obtain *moksha* in this very birth I might be born a *Bhangi* in my next. I believe in *varnashrama* both according to birth and to karma. But I do not regard *Bhangis* as in any sense a low order. On the contrary I know many *Bhangis* who are worthy of reverence. On the other hand there are Brahmins going about whom it would be very difficult to regard with any reverence. Holding these views, therefore, if there is a rebirth in store for me, I wish to be born a pariah in the midst of pariahs, because thereby I would be able to render more effective service to them and also be in a better position to plead with other communities on their behalf.

But just as I do not want the so-called touchables to despise the untouchables, so also I do not want the latter to entertain any feeling of hatred and ill will towards the former. I do not want them to wrest their rights by violence as is done in the West. The trend of world opinion is against such violence. I can clearly see a time coming in the world when it will be impossible to secure rights by arbitrament of force, so I tell my untouchable brethren today as I tell the Government, that if they resort to force for the attainment of their purpose they shall certainly fail.

I want to uplift Hinduism. I regard the untouchables as an integral part of the Hindu community. I am pained when I see a single *Bhangi* driven out of the fold of Hinduism. But do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. The *Gita* teaches us that members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same dharma for the Brahmin as for the *Bhangi*. But it insists that the latter shall be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning. It is therefore

our duty to see that the untouchables do not feel that they are despised or looked down upon. Let them not be offered leavings from our plates for their subsistence. How can I accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or *Bhangi*, who worships the same God and keeps his body and soul pure and clean? I for one would regard myself as having sinned if I gave to a *Bhangi* unclean food from the leavings from the kitchen or failed to render him personal assistance when he was in need.

Let me make my position absolutely clear. While I do hold that the institution of untouchability as it stands today has no sanction in Hinduism, Hinduism does recognize "untouchability" in a limited sense and under certain circumstances. For instance, every time that my mother handled unclean things she became untouchable for the time being and had to cleanse herself by bathing. As a *Vaishnava* I refuse to believe that anyone can be regarded untouchable by reason of his or her birth, and such untouchability as is recognized by religion is by its very nature transitory, easily removable and referable to the deed not the doer. Not only that. Just as we revere our mother for the sanitary service that she renders us when we are infants, and the greater her service the greater is our reverence for her, similarly the *Bhangis* are entitled to our highest reverence for the sanitary service they perform for society.

Now another point. I do not regard inter-dining and inter-marriage as essential to the removal of untouchability. I believe in *varnashrama* dharma. But I eat with *Bhangis*. I do not know whether I am a *sannyasi*, for I seriously doubt whether in this *Kaliyuga* it is at all possible for anyone to fulfil the conditions prescribed for a *sannyasi*. But I am moving deliberately in the direction of *sannyasa*. It is, therefore, not only not necessary for me to observe these restrictions but their observance may be even harmful for me. As regards the question of intermarriage, it does not arise in cases like mine. Sufficient for me to say that my scheme does not include intermarriage. Let me tell you that in my own clan all the members do not inter-dine. In certain cases among our *Vaishnava* families they do not use each other's utensils or even cook food on fire fetched from others' kitchens. You may call this practice superstitious, but I do not regard it as such. It certainly does no harm to Hinduism. In my Ashram, Dudhabhai, one of the untouchable inmates, dines with the rest without any distinction. But I do not recommend anybody outside the Ashram to follow this example. Again, you know the esteem in which I hold Malaviyaji. I would wash his

feet. But he would not take food touched by me. Am I to resent it as a mark of contempt? Certainly not, because I know that no contempt is meant.

The religion to which I belong prescribes for our observance *maryada*¹ *dharma*. The *rishis* of old carried on exhaustive researches through meditation, and as a result of the researches they discovered some great truths, such as have no parallel perhaps in any other religion. One of these was that they regarded certain kinds of foods as injurious for the spiritual well-being of man. So they interdicted their use. Now suppose someone had to travel abroad and live among strange people with different customs and standards as regard their diet. Knowing as they did how compelling sometimes the force of social customs of the people among whom men lived was, they promulgated *maryada dharma* to help one in such emergencies. Though, however, I believe in *maryada dharma*, I do not regard it as an essential part of Hinduism. I can even conceive a time when these restrictions might be abolished with impunity. But the reform contemplated in the untouchability movement does not obliterate the restriction as to inter-dining and intermarriage. I cannot recommend wholesale abolition of these restrictions to the public, even at the risk of being charged with hypocrisy and inconsistency. For instance, I let my son dine freely in Mussalman households because I believe he can take sufficient care as to what to take and what not to take. I myself have no scruples in taking my food in Mussalman households because I have my own strict rules about my diet. Let me tell you of an incident that happened at Aligarh. Swami Satyadev and I were Khwaja Sahib's guests. Swami Satyadev did not share my views. We argued about them. I told him that holding the views I did, it would be as wrong of me to refuse to partake of the food offered by a Mussalman as it would be on his part to transgress his *maryada*. So Swami Satyadev was provided with separate cooking arrangements. Similarly when I was Bari Sahib's guest he provided us with a Brahmin cook with strict instructions to obtain all the rations for us fresh from the bazaar. When asked why he put himself to such inconvenience he explained that he did so because he wanted to avoid the slightest possibility of suspicion on the part of the public that he entertained any secret designs of proselytization against me or my companions. That single incident raised Bari Sahib in my esteem. He sometimes commits mistakes, but he is as simple and innocent as a child.

¹ Bounds or limits

And although sometimes people complain of him to me bitterly, my first impression of him still remains.

I have dwelt on this point at such great length, because I want to be absolutely plain with you (untouchables). I do not want to employ diplomacy in my dealings with you or for that matter with anyone. I do not want to keep you under any false illusion or win your support by holding out temptations. I want to remove untouchability because its removal is essential for swaraj and I want swaraj. But I would not exploit you for gaining any political ends of mine. The issue with me is bigger even than swaraj. I am anxious to see an end put to untouchability because for me it is an expiation and a penance. It is not the untouchables whose *shuddhi* I effect—the thing would be absurd—but my own and that of the Hindu religion. Hinduism has committed a great sin in giving sanction to this evil and I am anxious—if such a thing as vicarious penance is possible—to purify it of that sin by expiating for it in my own person.

That being so, it follows that the only means open to me for my purpose are those of ahimsa and truth. I have adopted an untouchable child as my own. I confess I have not been able to convert my wife completely to my view. She cannot bring herself to love her as I do. But I cannot convert my wife by anger; I can do so only by love. If any of my people have done you any wrong, I ask your forgiveness for it. Some members of the untouchable class said when I was at Poona that they would resort to force if the Hindus did not alter their attitude towards them. Can untouchability be removed by force? Can the amelioration of the untouchables come through these methods? The only way by which you and I can wean orthodox Hindus from their bigotry is by patient argument and correct conduct. So long as they are not converted, I can only ask you to put up with your lot with patience. I am willing to stand by you and share your sufferings with you. You must have the right of worship in any temple in which members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of untouchability.

But I can help you in this only by following the way indicated by my religion and not by following Western methods. For that way I cannot save Hinduism. Yours is a sacred cause. Can one serve a sacred cause by adopting Satan's methods? I pray you, therefore, to dismiss from your mind the idea of ame-

liorating your condition by brute force. The *Gita* tells us that by sincerely meditating on the Lord in one's heart, one can attain *moksha*. Meditation is waiting on God. If waiting on God brings the highest bliss of salvation, how much quicker must it bring removal of untouchability? Waiting on God means increasing purity. Let us by prayer purify ourselves and we shall not only remove untouchability but shall also hasten the advent of swaraj.

Young India, 22-1-1925

398. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT COW-PROTECTION CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

[December 28, 1924]

The following is the substance of Mr. Gandhi's presidential speech at the Cow Conference held during the Congress week at Belgaum:

I hold the question of cow-protection to be not less momentous but in certain respects even of far greater moment than that of swaraj. I would even go so far as to say that just as so long as Hindu-Muslim unity is not effected, Hinduism not purged of the taint of untouchability and the wearing of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar does not become universal, swaraj would be impossible of attainment; even so, the term "swaraj" would be devoid of all meaning so long as we have not found out a way of saving the cow, for that is the touchstone on which Hinduism must be tested and proved before there can be any real swaraj in India. I claim to be a *sanatani* Hindu. People may laugh and say that to call myself a *sanatani* Hindu when I eat and drink from the hands of Mussalmans and Christians, keep an untouchable girl in my house as my daughter and do not even hesitate to quote the Bible, is nothing short of doing violence to language. But I would still adhere to my claim, for I have faith in me which tells me that a day would come—may be most probably after I am dead and no longer present in this world in the flesh to bear witness—when my critics would recognize their error and admit the justness of my claim. Pretty long while ago, I once wrote in *Young India* an article on Hinduism,¹ which I consider to be one of my most thoughtful writings on the subject. The definition of Hinduism which I gave in it is probably the

¹ *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 245-50.

clearest that I have ever given. After defining a Hindu as one who believed in the Vedas and Upanishads, recited the *Gayatri* and subscribed to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration, etc., I added that so far as the popular notion of Hinduism was concerned, its distinguishing feature was belief in cow-protection and reverence for the cow. I do not want to be told as to what Hindus ten thousand years ago did. I know there are scholars who tell us that cow-sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas. I remember when I was a high school student we read a sentence in our Sanskrit text-book to the effect that the Brahmins of old used to eat beef. That exercised my mind greatly and I used to wonder and ask myself whether what was written could be after all true. But as I grew up the conviction slowly forced itself upon me that even if the text on which these statements were based was actually part of the Vedas, the interpretation put upon it could not be correct. I had conceived of another way out of the difficulty. This was purely for personal satisfaction. "If the Vedic text under reference was incapable of bearing any other interpretation than the literal", I said to myself, "the Brahmins who were alleged to be eating beef had the power to bring the slaughtered animals back to life again." But that is neither here nor there. The speculation does not concern the general mass of the Hindus. I do not claim to be a Vedic scholar. I have read Sanskrit scriptures largely in translation. A layman like myself, therefore, can hardly have any *locus standi* in a controversy like this. But I have confidence in myself. Therefore I do not hesitate to freely express to others my opinions based on my inner experience. It may be that we may not be all able to agree as to the exact meaning and significance of cow-protection. For Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book or one prophet; nor does it possess a common creed—like the *Kalma*¹, of Islam—acceptable to all. That renders a common definition of Hinduism a bit difficult, but therein lies its strength also. For, it is this special feature that has given to Hinduism its inclusive and assimilative character and made its gradual, silent evolution possible. Go to any Hindu child and he would tell you that cow-protection is the supreme duty of every Hindu and that anyone who does not believe in it hardly deserves the name of a Hindu.

But while I am a firm believer in the necessity and importance of cow-protection, I do not at all endorse the current methods

¹ The creed of Islam as expressed in the verse from The Koran: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His apostle."

adopted for that purpose. Some of the practices followed in the name of cow-protection cause me extreme anguish. My heart aches within me. Several years ago I wrote in *Hind Swaraj* that our cow-protection societies were in fact so many cow-killing societies.¹ Since then and after my return to India in 1915, that conviction of mine has grown stronger and firmer every day. Holding the views that I do, therefore, I have naturally felt a great hesitation in accepting the Presidentship of this Conference. Would it be proper for me to preside over this Conference under these circumstances? Would I at all succeed in convincing you of the soundness of my views—radically different as they are from the commonly accepted notions on this subject? These were the questions that filled my mind. But Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande wired to me that I might preside over the Conference on my terms, that Sjt. Chikodi was familiar with my views on the matter and was at one with me to a very large extent. So much by way of personal explanation.

Once, while in Champaran, I was asked to expound my views regarding cow-protection. I told my Champaran friends then that if anybody was really anxious to save the cow, he ought once for all to disabuse his mind of the notion that he had to make the Christians and Mussalmans to desist from cow-killing. Unfortunately today we seem to believe that the problem of cow-protection consists merely in preventing non-Hindus, especially Mussalmans, from beef-eating and cow-killing. That seems to me to be absurd. Let no one, however, conclude from this that I am indifferent when a non-Hindu kills a cow or that I can bear the practice of cow-killing. On the contrary, no one probably experiences a greater agony of the soul when a cow is killed. But what am I to do? Am I to fulfil my dharma myself or am I to get it fulfilled by proxy? Of what avail would be my preaching *brahmacharya* to others if I am at the same time steeped in vice myself? How can I ask Mussalmans to desist from eating beef when I eat it myself? But supposing even that I myself do not kill the cow, is it any part of my duty to make the Mussalman, against his will, to do likewise? Mussalmans claim that Islam permits them to kill the cow. To make a Mussalman, therefore, to abstain from cow-killing under compulsion would amount in my opinion to converting him to Hinduism by force. Even in India under swaraj, in my opinion, it would be for a Hindu majority unwise and improper to coerce by legislation a Mussalman

¹ *Vide* Vol. X, p. 30.

minority into submission to statutory prohibition of cow-slaughter. When I pledge myself to save the cow, I do not mean merely the Indian cow, but the cow all the world over. My religion teaches me that I should by my personal conduct instil into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow-killing is a sin and that therefore it ought to be abandoned. My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow-protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.

Let alone other provinces. Would you believe me if I told you that the Hindus of Gujarat practice cow-killing? You will wonder but let me tell you that in Gujarat the bullocks employed for drawing carts are goaded with spiked rods till blood oozes from their bruised backs. You may say that this is not cow-killing but bullock-killing. But I see no difference between the two, the killing of the cow and killing her male progeny. Again you may say that this practice may be abominable and worthy of condemnation but it hardly amounts to killing. But here, again, I beg to differ. If the bullock in question had a tongue to speak and were asked which fate he preferred—instantaneous death under the butcher's knife or the long-drawn agony to which he is subjected, he would undoubtedly prefer the former. At Calcutta a Sindhi gentleman used to meet me often. He used always to tell me stories about the cruelty that was practised by milk-men on cows in Calcutta. He asked me to see for myself the process of milking the cows as carried on in the dairies. The practice of blowing is loathsome. The people who do this are Hindus. Again, nowhere in the world is the condition of cattle so poor as in India. Nowhere in the world would you find such skeletons of cows and bullocks as you do in our cow-worshipping India. Nowhere are bullocks worked so beyond their capacity as here. I contend that so long as these things continue we have no right to ask anybody to stop cow-killing. In *Bhagavata* in one place the illustrious author describes the various things which have been the cause of India's downfall. One of the causes mentioned is that we have given up cow-protection. Today I want to bring home to you if I can the close relation which exists between the present poverty-stricken condition of India and our failure to protect the cow. We, who live in cities, probably can have no idea of the extent of the poverty of our poor folk. Millions upon millions cannot afford to have two full meals per day. Some live on rotten rice only. There are others for whom salt and chillies are the only table luxuries. Is it not a just nemesis for our belying of our religion ?

Then in India we have the system of *pinjrapoles*¹. The way in which most of these are managed is far from satisfactory. And yet, I am sorry to observe that the people who are mostly responsible for them are Jains, who are out and out believers in ahimsa. Well organized, these *pinjrapoles* ought to be flourishing dairies supplying pure good milk at a cheap rate to the poor. I am told however that even in a rich city like Ahmedabad there are cases of the wives of labourers feeding their babies on flour dissolved in water. There cannot be a sadder commentary on the way in which we protect the cow than that in a country which has such an extensive system of *pinjrapoles* the poor should experience a famine of pure, good milk. That I hope will serve to explain to you how our failure to protect the cow at one end of the chain results in our skin and bone starvelings at the other.

If, therefore, I am asked how to save the cow, my first advice will be: "Dismiss from your minds the Mussalmans and Christians altogether and mind your own duty first." I have been telling Maulana Shaukat Ali all along that I was helping him to save his cow, i.e., the Khilafat, because I hoped to save my cow thereby. I am prepared to place my life in the hands of the Mussalmans, to live merely on their sufferance. Why? Simply that I might be able to protect the cow. I hope to achieve the end not by entering into a bargain with the Mussalmans but by bringing about a change of heart in them. So long as this is not done I hold my soul in patience. For I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such a change of heart can be brought about only by our own correct conduct towards them and by our personal example.

Cow-slaughter and man-slaughter are in my opinion the two sides of the same coin. And the remedy for both is identical, i.e., that we develop the ahimsa principle and endeavour to win over our opponents by love. The test of love is *tapasya* and *tapasya* means suffering. I offered to share with the Mussalmans their suffering to the best of my capacity not merely because I wanted their co-operation for winning swaraj but also because I had in mind the object of saving the cow. The Koran, so far as I have been able to understand it, declares it to be a sin to take the life of any living being without cause. I want to develop the capacity to convince the Mussalmans that to kill the cow is practically to kill their fellow-countrymen and friends—the Hindus. The Koran says that there can be no heaven for one who sheds the blood of

¹ Shelters for crippled and aged cattle

an innocent neighbour. Therefore I am anxious to establish the best neighbourly relations with the Mussalmans. I scrupulously avoid doing anything that might hurt their feelings. I even try to respect their prejudices. But I do this not in a spirit of bargain, I ask them for no reward. For that I look to God only. My *Gita* tells me that evil can never result from a good action. Therefore I must help the Mussalmans from a pure sense of duty—without making any terms with them. For more cows are killed today for the sake of Englishmen in India than for the Mussalmans. I want to convert the former also. I would like to convince them that whilst they are in our midst their duty lies in getting rid of their Western culture to the extent that it comes in conflict with ours. You will thus see that even our self-interest requires us to observe ahimsa. By ahimsa we will be able to save the cow and also to win the friendship of the English. I want to purchase the friendship of all by sacrifice. But if I do not approach the English on bent knees, as I do the Mussalmans, that is because the former are intoxicated with power. The Mussalman is a fellow-sufferer in slavery. We can therefore speak to him as a friend and a comrade. The Englishman on the contrary is unable to appreciate our friendly advances. He would spurn them. He does not care for our friendship, he wants to patronize us. We want neither his insults nor his patronage. We therefore let him alone. Our Shastras have laid down that charity should be given only to a deserving person, that knowledge should be imparted only to one who is desirous of having it. So we content ourselves with non-co-operating with our rulers—not out of hatred but in a spirit of love. It was because love was the motive force behind non-co-operation that I advised suspension of civil disobedience when violence broke out in Bombay and Chauri Chaura. I wanted to make it clear to Englishmen that I wanted to win swaraj not by shedding their blood but by making them feel absolutely at ease as regards the safety of their persons. What profit would it be if I succeed in saving a few cows from death by using force against persons who do not regard cow-killing as sinful? Cow-protection then can only be secured by cultivating universal friendliness, i.e., ahimsa. Now you will understand why I regard the question of cow-protection as greater even than that of swaraj. The fact is that the capacity to achieve the former will suffice for the latter purpose as well.

So far I have confined myself to the grosser or material aspect of cow-protection, i.e., the aspect that refers to the animal cow only. In its finer or spiritual sense the term cow-protection means

the protection of every living creature. Today the world does not fully realize the force and possibilities that lie hidden in ahimsa. The scriptures of Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus are all replete with the teaching of ahimsa. But we do not know its full import. The *rishis* of old performed terrible penances and austerities to discover the right meaning of sacred texts. Today we have at least two interpretations of the *Gayatri*. Which one of them is correct, that of the *sanatanis* or that of the Arya Samajists? Who can say? But our *rishis* made the startling discovery (and every day I feel more and more convinced of its truth) that sacred texts and inspired writings yield their truth only in proportion as one has advanced in the practice of ahimsa and truth. The greater the realization of truth and ahimsa the greater the illumination. These same *rishis* declared that cow-protection was the supreme duty of a Hindu and that its performance brought one *moksha*, i.e., salvation. Now I am not ready to believe that by merely protecting the animal cow, one can attain *moksha*. For *moksha* one must completely get rid of one's lower feelings like attachment, hatred, anger, jealousy, etc. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of cow-protection in terms of *moksha* must be much wider and far more comprehensive than is commonly supposed. The cow-protection which can bring one *moksha* must, from its very nature, include the protection of everything that feels. Therefore in my opinion, every little breach of the ahimsa principle, like causing hurt by harsh speech to anyone, man, woman or child, to cause pain to the weakest and the most insignificant creature on earth would be a breach of the principle of cow-protection, would be tantamount to the sin of beef-eating—differing from it in degree, if at all, rather than in kind. That being so, I hold that with all our passions let loose we cannot today claim to be following the principle of cow-protection.

At Lahore I met Lala Dhanpatrai, somewhat of a crank like myself. He told me that if I wanted to save the cow I should wean the Hindus from their false notions. He said it was Hindus who sold cows to the Mussalman butcher and but for them the latter would have no cows to kill. The reason for this practice he told me was economical. The village commons that served as grazing grounds for the cattle had been enclosed by the Government and so people could not afford to keep cows. He suggested a way out of the difficulty. It was no longer necessary, he told me, to sell cows that had ceased to give milk. He himself, he said, had tried the experiment of buying such cows. He then put them to the plough. After some time, if proper care was taken,

they put on flesh and became fit to bear again. I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. But I see no reason why this practice should not be generally adopted if the facts are as stated by Lala Dhanpatrai. Our Shastras certainly have nowhere said that under no circumstances should the cow not be used for draught purposes. If we feed the cow properly, tend it carefully and then use her for drawing carts or working the plough, always taking care not to tax her beyond her capacity, there can be nothing wrong in it. I therefore commend the suggestion for consideration and adoption if it is found to be workable. We may not look down upon a person if he tries to protect the cow in this manner.

Young India, 29-1-1925

399. *SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA STATES CONFERENCE,
BELGAUM¹*

[December 30, 1924]

I am overwhelmed with the affection which is shown to me by all during the past few days. Today the president of your Conference in adjourning the address to give me an opportunity to speak a few words to you has given further proof of it. You may know that I was born in an Indian village. I know Kathiawar States. My relations with them are cordial. Though I say little I am always watching the activities in the Indian States. In my Presidential Address I have made a reference to the Indian States. The All Parties Conference that met recently in Bombay has appointed a committee to draft a scheme of swaraj and in my address I have outlined my ideas of the coming swaraj. I had to condense my ideas in the shortest space possible and so I could give very few sentences to the Indian States. There are some *vakil* friends of mine who have something to say about this reference of mine to the Indian States. They are saying that I have spoken about the status of Indian princes and chiefs and nothing about their obligations towards their subjects. But I need not remind these friends of mine that rights always carry with them corresponding obligations. In my scheme of Indian swaraj there is no idea of destroying the States. I wanted to bring out this

¹ Presided over by N. C. Kelkar. As Gandhiji had to leave immediately, the president requested him to say a few words.

view prominently before the public. If, however, subjects from Indian States migrated to British Indian territory owing to the oppression of any Indian Prince, the swaraj government will on no account hand over these people to the mercies of the Prince concerned. This guarantee to the subject and the guarantee to the Princes about their status postulate good government in the Indian States.

In geometry there are certain postulates. So also there are some in the political science. When the Princes are guaranteed their status it is presumed that they will also guarantee progressive and enlightened government to their subjects. I am shortly to preside over the Kathiawar States Conference at Bhavnagar and I have reserved all my detailed say about the Indian States for this occasion. I was invited to preside over this Conference long ago. But before my incarceration I had unfurled the banner of satyagraha and I thought that my acceptance of the presidentship of any of these conferences might jeopardize the position of the Chiefs. I did not wish to put them in an awkward position and thus to mar the harmonious relations which existed between them and me. You know that I am an out-and-out believer in non-violence. To embitter the sweet relations between Princes and their subjects would be contrary to my principles. But I need not assure you that I can never forget the people of these States and their legitimate claims. My desire is to maintain sweet reasonableness in my handling the question of Indian States and I do not wish to prejudice any party. My sole desire is that the status of Princes and the rights of their subjects should be respected. I earnestly wish to enlist the sympathies of the Princes in this propaganda of khadi and the charkha. I have pinned my faith to the spinning-wheel. On it I believe the salvation of this country depends.

After the Mahatma left, Mr. Kelkar gave a summary of his speech in Marathi . . .

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-1-1925